

A. M. D. G.

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What's the Use of Latin?

(*Editor's Note:* Readers of the Bulletin will be pleased to know that the following is a transcript of an actual happening.)

Donald is a clever little eighth grader who calls me up on the phone at intervals and has me assign an hour for him to come in and have a talk. He is just beginning to get big ideas, rather sprawly and confused, but with gleams of light shining through the fog that indicate a final clearing up of his mental landscape. He does much reading of current magazine history and invention, and as a result is inclined to think he has about surrounded everything that is worth while in the modern world. But he is by no means hardened in his views, can assimilate a new point, readily acknowledges a puncture, and deflates gracefully when the point goes home. At present he is planning for high school and, characteristically, is aiming to surround it before he quite gets to it.

The other day he came in on schedule and, as always, had his subject ready.

"Father," he said, "if I take up Latin next year, what good will it do me?"

"That's a hard question, Don," I answered. "I can't tell how a suit of clothes will fit you or look on you until I see you wearing it. Even the doctor can't say what his medicine will do for the patient until the latter has taken it."

"Yes," said Don, "but you can tell ahead of time that I wouldn't look good in a yellow suit of clothes; and the doctor knows that rat poison wouldn't be good for me." As I intimated, Don has a head on him.

"But don't you see, Don," I countered, "you're changing the question. You ask me first what *good* Latin will do you, and now you shift over and talk about the *harm* it may do you. One thing I can assure you of, and that is, that Latin will never do you any harm. It won't be rat poison for you, that's certain."

"But, anyhow," said Don, "what good is it? It's a dead language, isn't it? And you can't do any-

thing with a thing that's dead. It's no use to anybody."

"I wouldn't say that absolutely, Don. A tree can be dead, but you still get good houses and furniture out of it. The sheep is likely dead that you got that suit of clothes from, and the cow you got those shoes from, but you're still doing something with the sheep and the cow. Your grandfather is dead, but you wouldn't say that even now he is no use to you."

"Grandpa is alive in the next world, though," said Don.

"That's true, he is the same grandpa yet and always will be. Nevertheless, as far as this world goes he is gone forever, but his life will have something big to do with everyone who comes after him, even though they don't recognize it. In its own way, you can say the same of Latin. It's gone, as far as a speaking language goes, but its influence is with us yet. Only you must get inside its range, if you wish it to do anything big to you."

"Well, what will it do for me?"

"I could say twenty things in answer to that, but I'll say only one. I know you like your native tongue, English, and you'd like to be an expert at using it. Is that right?"

"That's right," said Don.

"Well, let me show you how you'll never know English well, never know even the words you use, until you know rather a good deal about Latin."

Vergil's Aeneid happened to be lying within reach on my desk. I opened it at the first five lines.

"Now, Don, I'm going to throw you right out into the middle of a Latin ocean. Here's the greatest Latin poem in the world and I'm asking you to read it and see how much English is in it, or, if you look at it another way, how much Latin there is in English. Take it word for word now; leave out all the little words, and tell me as you go ahead, what English word you think of as you read the Latin. The first word *Arma*—what English word is from that?"

"Arms?" queries Don.

"Correct—and the next, *virumque*. Leave off the *que*. That's a tail. What word of ours is from

virum? It means 'man.' What word beginning with 'vir' means manly in English?"

"Virile," says Don.

"You've got it. Go ahead. *Cano* means 'sing.' What English word there?"

After a little struggle we got "chant," "cant," and "cantatrice."

"Now, *Troiae*. Name of a famous old city."

"Troy," says Don, getting enthusiastic and imagining he was reading Latin at sight, which of course, in a way, he was.

After we got over—"qui primus ab oris
Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit
Litora,

and dug derivations in real English out of every one of the words, Don was hot on the trail and was for reading the whole Aeneid on the spot.

"And that's where all the words come from!" he exclaimed.

"Not all of them, Don, but so very many of them that you would find yourself quite uncomfortable in trying to pass as an English scholar, not knowing them. You would finally decide that a dumb-bell in Latin is also a dumb-bell in English. And it's no fun being a dumb-bell in your native tongue."

"I was surely off-side when I thought Latin was dead. Why, it's alive in English. You can't talk English without talking Latin."

"You said a hatful that time, Don. And some day, when we have a little more time, I'll show you the same thing in Greek."

"Greek!" said Don. "Greek in English, too?"

"So much of it, son, that you can't know English completely unless you include Greek, also, in your studies. And so you see I've given you one reason for studying both Greek and Latin."

"It's a good reason, too," said Don. "And I'll take 'em both."

Joseph P. Conroy, S. J.

The Classical Club of St. Louis The Classical Club of St. Louis at the opening of the present season has a membership of seventy-five. In this group there are several professors from Washington University, a number of men and women from various private schools, a large representation from the public high schools, one business man, and one Jesuit. The Principal of Country Day School is President, the Jesuit, Vice-president.

The Executive Board, made up of President, Vice-president, Treasurer, a Professor from Washington U., and a high school teacher, had a meeting recently at Washington University to plan

the year. A number of problems came up for solution. Regarding the place of meeting, two suggestions were felt to be unsatisfactory or insecure. Thereupon a hospitable invitation was extended to the Club from the President of St. Louis University to hold the meetings in the St. Louis University Law School. This proposal was unanimously accepted.

The programme of the first meeting of the Classical Club of St. Louis consisted of two illustrated lectures, one "A Pilgrimage to Pagan Shrines" by Miss Lillian Heltzell of Central High School, the other "Latin and Some Early Christian Epitaphs" by Mr. Gerald J. Ellard, S.J., of St. Louis University. T. S. B.

Teaching Latin Syntax

Our students of fourth year high may be roughly divided into three groups. In the first group we find those who have actually mastered

"everything that is contained in Bennett's *New Latin Grammar*." These students for obvious reasons are few, very few.

In the second group we have those whose knowledge of syntax is good, you might say. They know nearly all the principal rules fairly well, and have some knowledge of less important ones: but this knowledge is often hazy and confused. They are not positively sure of themselves in elementary as well as in important matters. They form perhaps two-thirds of an average class. In reality they are the class.

To the third group belongs "the fringe." What they know about Latin syntax no one, least of all themselves, has ever been able to discover. How they have arrived so happily unscathed by any touch of syntactical knowledge at this terminus of their four year career, no one can easily say. Fortunately their numbers are not overpowering. They form possibly less than one-fourth of the class.

From this it will be seen that the students whom we ought to consider mainly are those whom we assigned to the second group, those namely whose knowledge, while in the main good, is yet too hazy, obscure, and confused to be entirely satisfactory. To improve these seems evidently our problem. But how shall we remove this haziness? *Hic Rhodus, hic salta*. To my mind the solution is easy enough—on paper, at any rate! Are we not trying to teach *too much* and as a result not teaching *well enough*? To me it seems that we are attempting *multa* with a consequent and necessary neglect of the *multum*. The old story recurs of the forest becoming obscured by a too great number of

trees, the "forest", in this instance being the essentials and fundamentals of syntax and the "trees", necessary and unnecessary rules and exceptions without distinction as to relative importance. The requirements of Bennett's Exercise Book are no doubt largely responsible for this. Now, Yenni's *New Latin Grammar* has something most instructive in the matter of syntax, which, if carefully adhered to, would probably clear away most of our difficulties.

Syntax in this book is divided into two distinct sections, the first dealing with what is aptly termed ACTIVE SYNTAX, the second with what is called PASSIVE SYNTAX. Let it not be supposed that the two are really distinct and different things. The one is merely an elaboration of the other. By ACTIVE SYNTAX is understood all rules of usage of which the student must have a positive, accurate knowledge for theme work. Of these rules he must be entire master without hesitation or haziness, and with no blank spaces anywhere along his line of knowledge. ACTIVE SYNTAX includes, therefore, only the most necessary and important rules of syntax with as few exceptions as is compatible with the sound and solid knowledge required for intelligent theme-work.

PASSIVE SYNTAX, on the other hand, treats of the rules of syntax in detail. It includes all the rules contained in ACTIVE SYNTAX together with all their elaborations and exceptions; and of these a student is supposed to have at least a passive knowledge. Practically, passive knowledge amounts to this: If you don't know the rule itself, you know, at least, where to find it in the book. It might be called a necessary knowledge for intelligent reading.

In view of all this, it strikes me that with regard to syntax our one constant and relentless aim, from the very moment we begin it, in second year until the very end of fourth year, should be to teach ACTIVE SYNTAX as explained in Yenni's Grammar. Not that PASSIVE SYNTAX should be neglected. That should be carefully taken care of in the Author class. But during the two periods devoted exclusively to formal theme work, week in and week out, year in and year out, we should, in my humble opinion, teach only fundamental and necessary syntax until, by dint of endless and wearisome repetition, the matter will have so worn itself into the brain cells as to leave an eternal impression there. Pursue this course doggedly with a class throughout second, third, and fourth years and what have you at the end? A class of boys whose knowledge of Latin syntax is positive, firm,

sure, and "clear as mountain air." There would be no haziness, nor cloudiness, no confused knowledge of a great number of points to the detriment of the whole. Boys trained along this line might not be able to tell you off-hand just what *Cum Explicativum* was, or *Cum Inversum*. They could, however, tell you just where to find it in the grammar. But ask them for an explanation of the three really important *Cums* viz., *Temporale*, *Circumstantiale*, *Causale*, and note how readily and accurately they respond!

Such positive and solid knowledge of necessary and important points is clearly far more desirable than cloudy and uncertain knowledge of both necessary and unnecessary rules and exceptions, without distinction as to relative importance. A boy entering college with such an accurate and positive knowledge of Syntax has a foundation on which a noble Latin superstructure may safely and readily be reared. There will never be any danger of the weight of the superstructure being too heavy for the foundation, and a disaster thereby ensuing.

What has here been set down is, perhaps, a long-drawn statement of the obvious. It is surely not new, being an application merely of an old principle: *non multa sed multum*. I offer it with some trepidation, but with the best of intentions as a wee bit of old wine in a newly-labeled bottle, to warm the hearts and heighten the spirits of laborers in the field of Latin Syntax.

A. B.

Is Latin Dead?

Professor J. P. Postgate, delivering an inaugural lecture for the academic year of 1909-10 at the University of Liverpool on "Dead Language and Dead Languages," uses this graceful argument in favor of the living Latin language: "If a great and world-wide Church uses Latin every day in its ritual and in the converse of its colleges and religious houses, and if newspapers are published in Latin in more than one civilized community, then to call Latin dead is perhaps a little premature."

Allan P. Farrell, S. J.

NOTICE

Those interested in New Testament interpretation will find a paper by Father Kleist, entitled "A Note on the Greek text of St. John XII, 7," in the October number of the *Classical Journal*. There an attempt is made to interpret the use of the subjunctive aorist in the final clause.

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A Letter from Father Provincial

Dear Father Kleist:

I am grateful for your letter of October 28th and for the copy of the Classical Bulletin. Let me congratulate you and your co-editors earnestly on the fine promise which this initial issue gives for the future of the classics in our Province. We are in need of encouragement, for of late years there have been serious misgivings in the minds of many regarding the future of Latin and Greek in our colleges. This fear is perhaps the natural result of the greater electivism permitted our students in colleges and high schools. On the other hand it seems to me that our students of the classics are now more select, and that therefore they should show a finer enthusiasm and better scholarship than in former years. Evidence that such is the case is not wanting. At Marquette, for example, the little Classical Bulletin published there convinces one that there is now deeper interest and better results in classical studies among the students of that university than ever before. The Classical Bulletin of the Province, of which you are editor, assuredly will stimulate zeal and enthusiasm for the cause in all our schools. The measure of its success in doing this will depend upon the extent to which you will gain the cooperation of every teacher of the classics in the Province. It is my earnest wish that you obtain generous support from all, and I promise to do my best to secure it for you and the Bulletin.

Again my congratulations and best wishes!

Very sincerely in Christ.

(Signed)

F. X. McMENAMY, S.J.

Flash Cards

Anyone teaching first year Latin will agree with the writer that the solid acquisition of a large vocabulary is the most difficult object to be attained. At least, this was the writer's conviction when he started his schedule of sixteen hours of first year Latin two years ago. Experience soon showed that forms could be fixed by a not entirely uninteresting drill, but words—they proved quite dry and unappealing: the boys as a rule learned them only half-heartedly. To overcome this aversion and to act out conviction, the following solution was hit upon. It proved altogether successful, and is here offered to others for what it is worth.

Sheets of heavy white drawing paper were cut up into cards eight inches long and three inches wide. On one side of these were printed in inch capitals the Latin words; on the opposite side their English equivalents. The cards were manufactured to meet the needs of the day, so that gradually all the prescribed vocables in Bennett were transferred, and the end of the year found the teacher in possession of a complete set of Flash Cards.

The following will demonstrate their use in daily recitation. The cards for the day are kept separate from those of the preceding eight or ten lessons. When the time for driving in the vocables comes, a card is held up and a pupil is required to give the genitive, gender, and meaning of a noun; the principal parts and meaning of a verb, or the genders and meaning of an adjective. Or, if the English is being drilled, the noun with its genitive and gender must be given, the verb with its principal parts, or the adjective with its genders. After a little practice this drill can be done very rapidly. The card is held up, the one to answer is designated by a nod or by name, and the words are gone through in single recitations. Then all the words for the day are drilled in unison. Finally, the previous eight or ten lessons are reviewed by concert drill, the teacher holding up each card in succession. This whole process does not require more than ten minutes, and usually less, so that vocabulary work comes as a diversion between the drilling and writing of forms.

As I see it, this use of Flash Cards has four distinct advantages. First: it trains the eye, which mere verbal drill fails to do. Secondly: It saves no small amount of time. Towards the end of the year when the words have begun to take deep root I have reviewed as many as ten words a minute, a feat which cannot be duplicated by the old familiar formula of: "Give me the word for—." Thirdly:

it saves the teacher's voice, certainly no small matter when one must drill four hours a day. Within a week the boys can be taught to recite correctly and to recite at a nod of the head. Thus the teacher can have ten minutes of very solid drill with scarcely a word spoken on his part. Of course, he is saved much correction of mispronunciation, by taking care that the pupils get the proper pronunciation in the explanations of the new lesson. Fourthly: The flash cards make possible the most exciting football games that can be waged in a first year class-room. The weekly review can be held as efficiently, and far more interestingly, by one of these games than by the written test, and if the teacher has taken care to stir up a spirited rivalry, battles can be waged which will live long in his own memory and in the memories of his pupils. Here is the game at its best. But of this later.

F. E. Welfle, S. J.

(*Editor's Note:* Some 25 years ago a number of linguists of international reputation, among them the *facile princeps* Otto Jespersen of Copenhagen, formed a committee for the purpose of investigating whether there is or ever has been any language in existence capable of being used for international communication. The answer returned in 1907 was an emphatic *No!* The committee then went to work and after seven years of the most painstaking labor produced the first grammar of a new language called Ido. Fr. Odenbach has been associated with this linguistic movement since 1917 when he became a member of the International Language Society of America, his card of membership bearing the number 964. He is a regular reader of the *Idist* monthly "Mondo," published at Stockholm, Sweden, and corresponds in Ido with its editor. The question was proposed to him whether Latin would ever be the future International Auxiliary Language.)

Latin—The International Language? "Will Latin be the future International Auxiliary Language?" The answer may be yes, and no.

In 1901 at a meeting of the international academies in Paris a committee was appointed to consider the question of an auxiliary international language. This body, composed of the best philologists and linguists of Europe and America, returned the following report:

First, they laid down a set of canons to which such a language, in order to come into general vogue, must of necessity conform:

1. The grammar must be reduced to its lowest terms.
2. The spelling must be phonetic.
3. The word-formation must not only be purely

logical but must follow the same rules in all cases.

4. There must be no exceptions anywhere.
5. The language must be of the greatest facility for the greatest number of people.

Second, the committee declared that none of the living or dead languages comes anywhere near fulfilling these requirements.

Finally, it offered a project embodied in what is now called IDO. The Latin alphabet was chosen for this new linguistic creation and one definite and invariable sound assigned to each letter. The grammatical endings are reduced to twenty to be applied to all words in the same manner without variations. Some eighty suffixes have been chosen and the laws laid down according to which words may be compounded. Lastly a root dictionary was presented containing some nine to ten thousand words.

The Ido grammar and dictionary, the latter containing from sixty to eighty thousand words, have been before the public since 1914 and are slowly but surely driving all competitors off the field.

In considering the canons it will be evident that the 5th practically controls the general aspect of the language, which is decidedly Latin. This last canon calls for a counting of *heads* in determining "the greatest number of people" to be benefitted by the new language, not for a counting of languages, as has been the case with the other projects. This means that, in choosing a root to represent an idea the question has to be put which one of all the roots in existence will be recognized and understood at first sight by the greatest number of people likely to use the new international language. Now let us glance at the following statistics:

English speaking people----	150 millions
French speaking people----	60 "
Spanish speaking people---	55 "
Italian speaking people----	40 "
Portuguese speaking people	30 "

Total ----- 335 millions

Add to these figures: German speaking people 120 millions, Russian 90, and it will at once be evident that in the great majority of cases a root can be formed that is common to quite a number of the Romance languages and to English. This, however, is owing to the fact that it is a Latin root. And so we find that in 5371 words chosen at random from the Ido dictionary

4880 occur in French
4454 occur in Italian
4237 occur in Spanish
4219 occur in English

and are therefore truly international.

We may therefore answer our question as to whether Latin will be the future International Auxiliary Language by saying, if grammar, spelling, and word-formation are considered,—by no means! If on the other hand we consider the foundations and the general character of this Ido language, we may say, yes! Ido looks and reads like Latin, and anyone acquainted with Latin will have very little difficulty in reading a text almost at first sight, and will enjoy it, too.

Frederick Odenbach, S. J.

High School Work in Latin Theme Being put to teach a talented group of boys Latin in fourth year high, and pondering the best way to improve the exceptional opportunity, I minded me of the success these same boys had achieved in their imitation work in the vernacular last year through Father Donnelly's excellent method of *Model English II*. I decided to adopt that method in teaching Latin theme.

Our first assignment in the author happened to be Cicero's *Pro Archia*. After prelection and translation I dictated the numerous idioms from the speech as well as idioms occurring in the exercises of Bennett's *Latin Composition* prescribed for the class in the first semester. Out of the thoughts familiar from the speech as well as from the material collated in the "phrase-book" (each boy had to build up a phrase-book and submit it to the instructor from time to time) sentences for Latin themes were constructed.

It is surprising to see how very formidable-looking sentences of no inconsiderable length were handled with good success, and even with dexterity and ease by a number of the students. This success will, no doubt, be the more marked if the speech under treatment is at the same time given for memory work in small installments and constantly repeated.

To me the process is proving an eye-opener in that the phrase, "to study a speech of Cicero," is assuming an altogether new meaning.

As for the boys—they must study hard, or get a very low average. Upon the first essay of this experiment several of the bright boys found themselves below passing: they had thought their stock-in-trade knowledge of words and syntax would carry them through. The next time they knew better and in consequence made a real success of it.

And there is this further encouraging feature about the method, as my short trial of it has con-

vinced me. While the less talented student finds it next to impossible to get a really good note for ordinary themes, because of the vagueness of his knowledge concerning the diverse points of grammar or syntax involved, he brightens up and does well when he has understood that nothing, or practically nothing, will occur in the theme that he cannot find and learn from the limited, specific assignment from the author submitted for his study at the time.

Whether or not I can keep up this thorough-going method of study with the class and cover the matter assigned, experience will have to show.

The question may be asked: But what about the prescribed themes in Bennett—they will be matter for examination?

The solution seems to be simple. Alongside the involved sentences modelled on Cicero, which the students will assimilate in the course of their "Model Latin" practice, much of Bennett is mere child's play. New idioms and worth-while turns of phrase that occur in Bennett are incorporated into the phrase book and the original themes. And as for syntax, there is no comparison,—the student who has learnt most of the syntax of Cicero, has little more to learn from other sources. *Qui potest maius, potest et minus*.

Finally, the plan includes the use of the translated speech, the themes, and the phrases, in a concerted effort at cultivating Latin conversation.

As a sample of some of the work done, I submit the following specimen theme-sentences to readers of the Bulletin.

1. Whatever natural talent you possess (and I perceive how great it is), should be devoted to the intense cultivation of the liberal arts.
2. There is a readiness of speech derived from the pursuit of these studies to which a wise boy will never be averse.
3. In the days of Cicero, when good teachers were not found in large numbers, the pupils committed to memory their discourses and wise sayings, and enjoyed their wisdom.
4. If Cicero was a well-trained speaker, why did he say he was only moderately practised in the art of speaking?
5. These men, though not at all used to courts and lawsuits, are such fluent speakers and such devoted students of the law that they will soon be well-trained lawyers; for the man who works is the man who wins.
6. Read the speeches of Cicero and you will learn to know that this great orator was not only specially

devoted to the pursuit of eloquence, but had the advantage of a good all-around training in the liberal arts.

7. But lest this seem strange to any of you, I ask you to remember that he was exempt from the thousand and one modern distractions (use: "sescentae res novae") that surround us, and that he always applied the great principle: No one does more than he who does one thing at a time. (Note the Ignatian: "nemo plus agit quam qui unum agit").

James A. Preuss, S. J.

Homer and His Influence. By John A. Scott. Marshall Jones, Boston.

Professor Tierney of Dublin closed a recent paper on *Homer From Two Points of View* with the words: "The best feature of the modern trend in Homeric criticism is that the study of Homer as a poet is being made once more possible." (*Studies*, June 1925, p. 251.) To Professor Scott, in America, and to Professor Shorey first honors for this welcome change are due. The assignment of the volume under review to Professor Scott by the editors of the series, *Our Debt to Greece and Rome*, is a tribute of the appropriate sort to his signal merits; whilst the book itself, brief, untechnical, pleasant to read, is a bright auspice of the better day in Homeric criticism.

Professor Scott, whose former work, on *The Unity of Homer*, dealt at length with the long-standing controversy, here draws clear of it in the first brief chapter, and sails into waters of richer commerce. Of Homer's life, obviously, he tells us little; for the name that fathers twin masterpieces of unique poetry has no human biography to give it substance. It is reducible, finally, to the names *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Separate chapters of literary analysis are given to each of these titles, with a very practical chapter on translations of Homer preceding, and a synthetic appreciation of *The Reach of His Genius* following. Pendant, in a few condensed pages is a striking exhibit of the permeation of a single Homeric type—that of Proteus—in English literature.

The chapters of the remaining group are in my opinion the best of all, showing the influence of Homer among the ancient Greeks, upon Roman Italy, at the Renaissance, in England. Teachers of literature, classical, romance, or English, cannot miss these without missing something they certainly want. Here as elsewhere Professor Scott is specific, concrete. His erudition in the world-field of creative literature is inspiringly wide and fertile.

The faults of the book are matters of isolated detail. One is a misstatement of a point of theology: the Manichaen and the Judaeo-Christian accounts of the evil in the world are adequately distinct. (p. 30.) A paragraph on the debt of Attic tragedy to Homer is sure to mislead the uninitiated reader: Professor Scott's own Sather Lectures would have supplied the corrective. (*Homer*, p. 160. *The Unity of Homer*, pp. 26-28; 196-199.) In a personal testimony to the advantage of reading Milton in English rather than Homer out of Greek, Professor Scott would have liked, I am sure, to remind us of the concurring testimony of Matthew Arnold.

(*Homer*, p. 136. Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*. Second Series. *Milton*, p. 66 of the London edition of 1895.)

Edgar R. Smothers, S. J.

A Communication

Dear Father Editor:

An article in the October issue of the *Bulletin*, on "Feeling the Pulse of the Classics," raised the ever-present question of a method to eliminate the use of "ponies" in the Latin classes. The writer indicated that in dealing with the situation he is using mimeographed vocabularies and word tests. May I suggest that such a method is good, but not good enough? The students need an increased vocabulary, but that in itself does not go far enough. Most of those who use "ponies" are addicts of long standing, despite the fact that vocabularies and word tests have been provided for them in high school, and hence they have never learned how to translate, how to put words together to form a sentence, and sentences to form ideas. They need to be taught *how* to do this. I make the start by stating that we are to do some sight translation every day. For the first few weeks the work is the veriest drudgery, consisting largely of worming out of the students cases, meanings of words, parts of the verb, agreements, and so forth. But soon light begins to dawn. The sight translation goes on, with the fact held out to the class that it *must* learn to translate by sight if it is to pass a satisfactory test and examination for credit. After more than two years of strict adherence to this policy and method of procedure, it is my conviction that it, more than anything else, will do away with "ponies," even eliminate the need of vocabularies and word tests (in college), and turn out students who can translate ordinary Latin at sight.

A limited number of copies of the first issue of the *Classical Bulletin* Vol. II are still available.

AD SOLEM OCCIDENTEM

PROOEMIUM

Quam dulcis gemitus defluit undulans
ventis de tacitis ut fidium melos,
chordae dum citharae carminis impetum
maestum concipiunt! Spiritus ingemit,

quum dulcedo gravans provehitur, quoad
manat corde dolor.—Flammeus ut globus,
lente, colle tenus, Sol cadit igneus,
una at garrit avis cedere iam diem!

O Sol, qui cadis ut temporibus piis
in somnum placidum cum modulamine,
non cultu radians, sed radiis tuis,
sit, messor metat, haud te canit, ut metit.

Nec symphonia te concinit haec mea;
oh, deceptus eris, carmina percipiens
vana haec si reputes pro numeris, pie
qui praeconia nunc pristina replicent!

In campo tamen hoc, quem tenet Alta Crux,
miro, nescio quo, flectitur impetu
ad te nunc caput, et dum imperitas meis
venis, es mihi, Sol, mortuus haud deus.

Non credo satis ut te venerer deum—
ut tanger dubio fervidior fides:
quaenam saeva dei vis lacrimae sacrae
fontem sic statuit cor mihi? Perpetim

longo, Sol, recubas in Cruce lumine.
Quae secreta tenent hi digiti rubri?
Haec fors clavis erit, qua pateat tuum
secretum radians? Estne dolor, dolor?

Ignitam remove ex aure comam, melos
audi quod Boreae tempora nesciunt.
Romae audacius est, tristius Helladi,
rebus dulce feris quae fugiunt cito!

—Anthony F. Geyser, S.J.

ODE TO THE SETTING SUN

PRELUDE

The wailful sweetness of the violin
Floats down the hushed waters of the wind,
The heart-strings of the throbbing harp begin
To long in aching music. Spirit-pined,

In wafts that poignant sweetness drifts, until
The wounded soul ooze sadness. The red sun,
A bubble of fire, drops slowly toward the hill,
While one bird prattles that the day is done.

O setting sun, that as in reverent days
Sinkest in music to thy smoothed sleep,
Discrowned of homage, though yet crowned with rays,
Hymned not at harvest more, though reapers reap:

For thee this music wakes not. O deceived,
If thou hear in these thoughtless harmonies
A pious phantom of adorings reaved,
And echo of fair ancient flatteries!

Yet, in this field where the cross planted reigns,
I know not what strange passion bows my head
To thee, whose great command upon my veins
Proves thee a god for me not dead, not dead!

For worship it is too incredulous,
For doubt—oh, too believing-passionate!
What wild divinity makes my heart thus
A fount of most baptismal tears?—Thy straight

Long gleam lies steady on the Cross. Ah me!
What secret would thy radiant finger show?
Of thy bright mastership is this the key?
Is this thy secret, then? And is it woe?

Fling from thine ear the burning curls, and hark
A song thou hast not heard in Northern day;
For Rome too daring, and for Greece too dark,
Sweet with wild things that pass, that pass away!
—Francis Thompson.

The Rational Element in the Classics

"Their distinguishing mark is that their beauty consists in harmonious reason. Of course they lack neither imagination, nor passion, nor even sensibility, but it is not in these qualities that they stand unrivalled; it is rather in their easy balance, their beautifully simple arrangement, in the luminous beauty of the whole and of detail which fully satisfies and delights the reason. Now these are educative qualities in the highest degree. Sensibility, imagination, and passion are per-

sonal matters; they are accidental, variable characteristics, which it is hardly useful and which it may be dangerous to cultivate. Reason, on the contrary, serves everybody under all circumstances. We cannot strengthen it too much. It is the universal language by means of which men understand each other and draw nearer to one another."

Alfred Croiset, Dean of the *Faculte des Lettres* of the Sorbonne.

